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# From Des Moines To Keokuk

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## From Des Moines To Keokuk

The journey down the Des Moines River by the nondescript Industrial Army was witnessed by thousands of Iowans. Newspapers had been lavish in their coverage of the exploits of General Kelly and they continued to publish daily accounts as the Army, now referred to as "Navy," floated slowly down the Des Moines. While each community did its best to feed the men, the following excerpts from various points along the way clearly indicate the apprehension felt and the necessity for keeping Kelly's "Navy" a safe distance from the towns. The larger towns were prepared to resist, with special police, any attempt of the huge fleet to dock at their doorsteps. Kelly, being a peaceful man, was aware of the problem, and invariably agreed to anchor his boats at a designated point.

PRAIRIE CITY, May 11—Special: Gen. Kelly left Runnells last night at 11 o'clock. Yesterday a delegation of citizens of Runnells, upon learning of his arrival near there, waited upon him and offered him a purse of \$75 to make a speech in the little town hall. The offer was accepted, and a meeting, consisting of the usual songs and speech-making was held at 7:30. At the conclusion of the entertainment preparations were made for the departure. The men who had grown tired of Kelly's talk



and repaired to the camp to sleep, were roused and the start made at 11 o'clock. The river was rough, and on account of snags and sand bars but little progress was made, at 3 o'clock but seven miles having been accomplished. The order was given to halt. An order to break camp was issued at 6 o'clock. During the night one boat capsized and the occupants deserted and started at once for the open country. At noon boats could be seen stopping at every farm house begging for supplies, but with little success. A strong wind from the southeast retarded the progress of the fleet very much, and made rowing a necessity. The first boats containing General Kelly and crew arrived at Red Rock about 3 o'clock. General Kelly at once began to solicit food for the hungry army, but

#### MET WITH A COLD RECEPTION

from the hard working farmers who had come to see the sights and not to contribute. Finding begging of no avail, the general tried his persuasive powers by threatening to allow the men to help themselves. This being met with no encouragement, he agreed to purchase supplies. A veal, two hogs and three cases of eggs were bought and paid for by Kelly at the regular market price. Preparations were made for lunch which was served at half rations. The men, although very tired and sore, bear with their privations fairly well and to-day when camp was sighted many songs, ranging from "After the Ball" to "Pull for the Shore," could be heard. The great majority are talking of reaching Washington in time to celebrate July 4, but a large number are looking forward to St. Louis as the end of their journey and a haven of rest.

TRACY, May 12.—Special: Kelly's army passed here this afternoon and will camp at the iron bridge eight miles south of this place. Oskaloosa will feed the army at the bridge Sunday and thousands of people will witness



the sight. The banks are lined with people watching the army as they pass. The Rock Island road had a special train and force of men guarding the bridge across the river at Harvey station up the river three miles. Col. Speed passed through to Given last night.

EDDYVILLE, May 14.—At 4:30 Kelly's fleet appeared in sight at the bend, one mile north, and over 2,000 people swarmed on the bank of the river and on both the wagon and railroad bridges. A landing was made just below the bridge near town, and the boats were unloaded and fires built for a camp, but the city authorities made them break camp and a second camp was pitched one mile down the river. Eight hundred loaves of bread and other provisions were furnished them. General Kelly made a short speech in front of the Penick hotel to a small crowd last evening, thanking the people for their hospitality, and returned to camp and at 11 p.m. the fleet started down the river en route to Ottumwa. There was more or less begging at the private houses by members of the army yesterday evening, but without very good success.

OTTUMWA, May 14.—The mayor and city council met Kelly at Eddyville and told him he would be furnished provisions if he would pass through the city and camp three miles below; if not, he could not enter the city. Kelly accepted the terms and moved from Eddyville early this morning. The city is guarded by two hundred extra officers. The Kelly boats began to arrive at 11 o'clock. Ten thousand people were in town to see them. The boats were floated under guard to the camp. A plentiful supply of provisions was furnished.

There was a small sized riot at the Kelly camp this evening. The mayor of Ottumwa hired and paid for the grounds for the army to camp on. When the teams ar-



rived the owner of the ground demanded an admission of 10 cents to enter. After a number had paid Kelly arrived and demanded that it be stopped. The owner refused, and Kelly ordered a guard of twenty men to hold the gate open. When the men attempted to shut it a scuffle ensued between the industrials and the employees of the owner of the grounds. It was soon stopped by the mayor who decided in favor of Kelly, who opened the gates.

OTTUMWA, May 16.—There is much excitement in Eldon over Kelly's army. As a boat was coming down the river the citizens hailed it for purpose of supplying provisions. The deputy sheriffs employed by the Rock Island rushed down to prevent the landing. A stone was thrown at the Kelly men, breaking the ribs of one and knocking another unconscious. At another point the Rock Island deputies attempted to prevent a landing and a pitched battle ensued. Conductor Charles Martin was struck on the head and it is thought his skull is fractured. Two Kellyites were arrested and will be tried this afternoon.

ELDON, May 15.—To-night 100 boats of Kelly's army camped half a mile below the city, the rest scattered on shoals, rocks and sand bars, ten miles above. The Rock Island run all the engines out of the city, taking this precaution against an attempt to steal a train. Deputy sheriffs in profusion had orders to allow no Kelly men to land. One boat did so, a deputy ordered it on. Words passed and the commonwealers threw rocks at the sheriffs, whereupon two men were arrested and gave bond to appear in the morning.

KEOSAUQUA. May 16.—Special: Kelly's army camped this evening at Pittsburg, and will pass Keosauqua to-morrow morning. All is quiet on the Des Moines.



KEOSAUQUA, May 17.—The advance boats of Kelly's fleet reached here at 7 this morning. No one was allowed to land, and they camped a half mile below town. The people furnished 600 loaves of bread, a hundred pounds of coffee and a fat beef.

BONAPARTE, May 17.—The first boat of the Kelly fleet slid over the dam at 3 o'clock this afternoon, and by 8:30 all were over, with no damage beyond wetting a few men. A large crowd witnessed the passing of the dam. Bonaparte and Farmington gave 1,600 loaves of bread, two beeves, some coffee and a few beans.

CROTON, Iowa, May 18.—Kelly's army broke camp at 5 this morning. A strong wind accompanied by rain was blowing on the unsheltered men, and all were clamoring for a pull at the oars to keep from freezing. Better time has not been made since leaving Des Moines.

SAND [SPRING?] PRAIRIE, May 18.—Many of the boats of Kelly's flotilla are so far behind that the general decided to go into camp at St. Francisville, ten miles above Keokuk, where roaring fires are now burning, around which the boys are trying to dry their damp clothes and absorb a comfortable degree of heat.

KEOKUK, May 19.—Kelly's army landed three miles below the city on the Missouri shore at 11 o'clock, where provisions were delivered.

### *Kellyites Float On The Mississippi*

KEOKUK, May 20.—Saturday night and this morning the men were busily engaged in lashing their boats together into one large raft, lumber and rope furnished by the citizens of Keokuk being used for the purpose. The raft is twelve boats long and is secure in every way, but owing to the fact that the boats are only six inches deep



they cannot sail on the Mississippi when the wind is up as the water would wash into them. Gen. Kelly made a contract with Parmalee Bros., owners of the steamer J. W. Mills, to tow the fleet to Quincy for \$100. Col. Speed, Gen. Kelly's right-hand man, and local Populist celebrities, spoke to the multitudes on the principles of the commonweal movement. Gen. Kelly spoke at the opera house here Saturday night to about 100 persons. About twenty-five recruits joined the army here.

From Quincy on, large numbers of Kelly's followers defected and by the time St. Louis was reached many of his original followers had melted away. Only a small remnant ever reached Washington and their impact on the Nation's lawmakers was even less than that of Coxey and his Commonwealth army. While it traveled through Iowa, however, General Kelly and his Industrial Army was headline news.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN